



MONTANA

Occupant Protection Safety Assessment

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In 2004, 42,636 persons were killed and nearly 2.8 million injured in motor vehicle crashes in the United States. Motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of death for individuals from age 5 through 27. Motor vehicle crashes are the principal cause of on-the-job fatalities and are the leading cause of accidental death in the United States. Nationwide, the economic cost of motor vehicle crashes exceeds \$230 billion annually.

Occupant Protection Special Management Review

The mission of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is to reduce deaths, injuries, and economic and property losses resulting from motor vehicle crashes. Moreover, as the grantor federal agency, it is appropriate for the NHTSA Rocky Mountain Region Office to oversee the MT Department of Transportation's operations to assure that the State is suitably equipped and organized with adequate powers to manage the federally funded occupant protection highway safety program and related traffic safety grant programs.

To this end, NHTSA developed guidelines to provide more specific guidance on when it is appropriate to use management reviews and improvement plans to assist States with their highway safety programs. A Special Management Review, or SMR, examines management and operational practices in specific program area(s) (e.g. occupant protection) to determine program performance and progress. To provide consistency across all states and territories, SMRs are preceded by analyses of the most current and best data available from the Fatality Analysis and Reporting System (FARS), mileage death rates, alcohol death rates and safety belt surveys. SMRs are scheduled as a result of a State's consistently worse-than-national-average performance and progress less than half of that recorded by the Nation as a whole.

In the first quarter of each fiscal year, NHTSA reviews each State's performance, using FARS data and/or the State's certified safety belt surveys, for a base year and the three most recent years. NHTSA compares each State's performance during the three most recent years with the national average performance (based on FARS and National Occupant Protection Usage Survey data) for those same three years. Next, NHTSA determines how much the State's performance improved during the three consecutive years (i.e., improved beyond the performance recorded during the base year immediately prior to the three year span). NHTSA compares the State's performance improvement with the national average performance improvement over the same three years.

NHTSA identifies as candidates for Special Management Review all States that:

- Performed worse than the national average in each of the three years, AND
- Registered less than half as much improvement over the three consecutive years (compared to the base year) as did the nation as a whole.¹

¹ Mitigating factors may also be taken into consideration. For example, NHTSA will examine recent programming and legislative changes and other factors like the passage of a primary belt law or unusual political, economic and societal changes that the State brings to our attention, to determine if a Special Management Review is warranted.

At the beginning of FY06, NHTSA reviewed each state's performance and identified MT for an occupant protection special management review in FY07, based its safety belt use rate performance in recent years. However, on December 13, 2005, the NHTSA Rocky Mountain Regional Administrator petitioned the NHTSA Injury Control Operations and Resources Associate Administrator for an exemption from an OP SMR, given that MT had formally requested a full OP program assessment with the NHTSA Occupant Protection Division on December 8, 2005. On December 21, 2005, the NHTSA Associate Administrator granted the exemption request, citing the following conditions:

The exemption for Montana is granted based on the fact that a Safety Belt Assessment will be conducted in the State this fiscal year, which should cover the same areas that a SMR would, and the State has agreed in writing to implement all of the recommendations from the Assessment.

On February 6, 2006, the NHTSA Occupant Protection Division Chief issued a letter to the MT Governor's Representative, confirming a joint occupant protection assessment/SMR May 15-19, 2006, and the NHTSA Rocky Mountain Region and NHTSA Occupant Protection Division partnered on merging the traditional OP Assessment Guidelines and tools and the Occupant Protection SMR tools. Revised guidelines and questionnaires were shared with the MT DOT in preparation for the enhanced assessment.

Enhanced Occupant Protection Assessment

The purpose of the enhanced occupant protection assessment was: to aid the Montana State Highway Traffic Safety Office (SHTSO) in the review of occupant protection programs in the State; to identify the program's strengths, accomplishments and problem areas; and to offer recommendations for improvement. The enhanced assessment can be used as a tool for planning purposes and for making decisions about how to best use available resources and provide an organized approach for measuring program progress.

The occupant protection assessment establishes criteria against which statewide and community programs are measured. The assessment examines significant components of the occupant protection programs. Each State, in cooperation with its political subdivisions, should have a comprehensive program that educates and motivates its citizens to use available motor vehicle occupant protection systems. A combination of use requirements, aggressive enforcement, public information, education and incentives is necessary to achieve significant, lasting increases in safety belt usage that will prevent fatalities and decrease the number and severity of injuries.

The Team noted that many fine programs are performed throughout the State of Montana in the area of Occupant Protection and traffic safety in general. It is not the intent of this assessment/SMR to thoroughly document all of these successes, nor to credit the large number of individuals at all levels who are dedicated to traffic safety. By its very nature, the assessment tends to focus on areas that need improvement. This should not be viewed as criticism. Instead, it is an attempt to provide assistance to all levels for improvement, which is consistent with the overall goals of these types of assessments.

Enhanced Assessment Process

The NHTSA Regional Office served as the facilitator and advisor for the occupant protection enhanced assessment. In partnership with the MT SHTSO, NHTSA recommended a team of six individuals with demonstrated expertise in various aspects of occupant protection program development and implementation. Efforts were made to select a team that reflected the needs and interests expressed by the MT SHTSO in the pre-assessment meeting. The assessment consisted of interviews with the State and community level programs directors, coordinators, advocates and the SHTSO. The conclusions drawn by the Assessment Team are based upon, and limited by, the facts and information provided by various experts who made presentations to the panel.

Following the completion of the presentations, the Team convened to review and analyze the information presented. The Assessment Team noted the strengths and challenges as well as recommendations and compiled them in this report. This report is a consensus report. The recommendations were based on the unique characteristics of the State and what the Assessment Team members believed the State and its political subdivisions and partners could do to improve the effectiveness and comprehensiveness of their programs.

On the final day of the assessment, the Team briefed the SHTSO on the findings of the assessment and discussed major points and recommendations in the report.

Outcomes

The report has been provided electronically and in hard copy to the State of Montana, the NHTSA Injury Control Operations and Resources, the NHTSA Occupant Protection Division and the NHTSA Rocky Mountain Region for oversight of state progress.

As a condition of the FY07 OP SMR exemption, The MT SHTSO has agreed to use the assessment report as the basis for planning occupant protection program improvements, assessing legislative priorities, providing for additional training and evaluating funding priorities.

Moreover, the NHTSA Rocky Mountain Region will work collaboratively with the MT SHTSO to develop Performance Enhancement Plan (PEP) to implement the recommendations outlined in this report to the best of their ability. The PEP will detail state strategies for implementing the recommendation(s); establish target dates for completion of each recommendation; and detail the status/progress of each recommendation based upon periodic reporting by the State and regional monitoring.

Montana Demographics

Montana is a large State with a relatively small population base. It is comprised of 145,552 square miles and has an estimated 2004 population of 926,865. This equates to 6.2 persons per square mile.

In 2004 there were 229 traffic fatalities in Montana. The fatality rate was 2.04 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled (compared to 1.44 in the U.S.) and 24.71 per 100 thousand population (compared to 14.52 in the U.S.). In fatal crashes in Montana in 2004, only 25 percent of occupants were restrained.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Priority recommendations are “bolded” in individual sections.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Dedicate a full-time staff member to lead and manage the occupant protection program.
- ◆ Ensure that funding levels are aligned with identified program priorities.
- ◆ To support project self-sufficiency:
 - ◇ Initiate a tracking system for in-kind resources;
 - ◇ Establish a reward mechanism to recognize those entities which provide significant resources of their own to the program; and
 - ◇ Provide information, training, and guidance on self-sufficiency to all subgrantees.

2. LEGISLATION/REGULATION/AND POLICY

- ◆ Adopt a primary safety belt law.
- ◆ Adopt technical corrections to the primary child passenger safety law to reinstate its primary status.

3. LAW ENFORCEMENT

- ◆ Host a Statewide traffic safety/occupant protection (OP) summit for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges. This will provide a forum for dialogue; an avenue to highlight OP issues; a mechanism to train judges and prosecutors on recent legislation; media relations training for line officers; etc.
- ◆ Provide training and information to the command staff of the State’s police and sheriff’s departments that demonstrates how to reduce crime and calls for service through a strong traffic enforcement program.
- ◆ Encourage the continuation and expansion of the tribal DUI task force efforts being established on three reservations, and insure the continued emphasis on occupant protection enforcement.

4. COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

- ◆ Develop SHTSO web page to clearly reflect leadership role and staff responsibilities, identify mission, goals, program activities, related laws and partner agencies and public information resources that comprise the State's transportation safety program.
- ◆ Expand the use of local statistics in educational and informational materials to stimulate increased public interest and awareness.

5. OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN (OPC) PROGRAM

- ◆ To increase the number of OPC advocates and create additional grass roots support for primary OP laws, short awareness courses should be conducted to reach professions such as law enforcement officers, first responders, child care providers, and health care personnel.
- ◆ Make it a priority to develop a stand-alone, easy to remember, occupant protection/child passenger safety website, e.g. www.buckleupmontana.org and a corresponding toll-free telephone number. The goal of the website and toll-free line is to serve as a centralized source for Montana-specific safe transportation information. Through these services parents, caregivers, transporters and advocates can access accurate information about Montana's occupant protection restraint laws, the correct use of restraint systems for children, youth and adults and the types and locations of services available.

6. OUTREACH PROGRAM

- ◆ Develop and implement systems to provide education on the importance of proper restraint use to law enforcement and teen/school audiences throughout the State on a regular basis.
- ◆ Expand SafeKids/Safe Communities (SKSC) outreach to all Montana tribes.
- ◆ Intensify outreach (fact sheets, data, personal contacts, etc.) to law enforcement, fire, medical, emergency medical services, and others to increase support of occupant protection program efforts.

7. DATA AND EVALUATION

- ◆ Complete the Section 408 *Traffic Records Improvement* grant application and focus on needed linkages of key highway safety databases to obtain timely and comprehensive data for planning, programming and evaluation. Include a method, such as Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation System (CODES), to link trauma data to crash data in order to gain a more complete picture of state and local community crash outcomes and economic costs.

- ◆ Adopt quantifiable objectives and performance measures for evaluation and review of all occupant protection projects that clearly correlate with the State's program goals and objectives. Establish and provide examples of evaluation options in sub-grants, such as pre- and post evaluations or comparison data demonstrating a change in awareness, knowledge, and/or occupant protection behaviors.
- ◆ Integrate productivity measures of overall safety belt use and conversion rates into the planning and evaluation of programs.
- ◆ Support the *Comprehensive Highway Traffic Safety Plan* data goal of “developing data collection procedures that will encourage coordination with other entities and establish a data collection process and storage to be used in project decision-making.”

1. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

GUIDELINE:

Each State should have centralized program planning, implementation and coordination to achieve and sustain high rates of safety belt use. Evaluation is also important for determining progress and ultimate success of occupant protection programs.

1A. STRENGTHS

- ◆ Montana has demonstrated its commitment to improving its occupant protection program and increasing the use of safety belts and child restraints by supporting and conducting this assessment.
- ◆ The State Highway Traffic Safety Office (SHTSO) functions at a high level within the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) with the state highway safety officer reporting directly to the MDT Director. The MDT Director is appointed by the Governor and also serves as the Governor's Highway Safety Representative and the designated MDT tribal liaison.
- ◆ Under the proactive leadership of the Governor, the MDT and SHTSO have achieved exceptional success in establishing positive working relationships with the seven Indian reservations in Montana. These relationships have resulted in traffic safety enforcement and communications projects with several of the tribes, greater cooperation among law enforcement, much higher emphasis on traffic safety among the tribes, greater communication and coordination with the Bureau of Indian Affairs highway safety program, and more resources allocated to those in need of highway safety assistance.
- ◆ The Office of the Governor appointed a very knowledgeable and dedicated Indian Affairs Coordinator to provide critical liaison among the state agencies and the tribes. The MDT, SHTSO and the Coordinator have a close and positive relationship which supports information sharing and participation of the Governor's Office in the traffic safety program.
- ◆ MDT has committed Section 402, Section 405, Section 157 Incentive, Section 157 Innovative, Section 2003B, and Section 163 funds, as well as state and local funding, to support occupant protection in the state. In 2005 alone, the state committed almost 40 percent of its 402 funds to occupant protection (OP); over \$1.7 million from all fund sources were planned for OP.
- ◆ The SHTSO aggressively pursues available funding to enhance the traffic safety program and is currently preparing to apply for new SAFETEA-LU incentive funds.
- ◆ Although the SHTSO historically recorded a high proportion of carry forward funds, by FY2006 this percentage had been reduced to 28 percent carry forward – only three percent from the target of a maximum of 25 percent.

- ◆ The SHTSO initiated a new internal accounting system approximately two and a half years ago to track funds by project and fund source. The implementation of this system has assisted the SHTSO to accurately report to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and to work toward the significant reduction in carry forward funds.
- ◆ In 2004, the SHTSO implemented a new monitoring process, including training in project monitoring for all staff. Policies and procedures were updated and implemented on file management, reporting requirements, contractor payments, contract and sub-recipient monitoring, plus contract and closeout procedures.
- ◆ In 2004, the MDT recognized the need to coordinate activities and resources to achieve safer transportation and established the Montana Traffic Safety Committee, chaired by the MDT director. This Committee and a consultant team under contract to MDT are responsible for developing a *Comprehensive Highway Traffic Safety Plan*. The process for this Plan encompasses a unified approach and a very large number of critical traffic safety partners, including tribal partners.
- ◆ As indicated in the preliminary and draft *Comprehensive Highway Traffic Safety Plan*, the State is expecting to establish an ambitious priority goal to increase safety belt use to 90 percent.
- ◆ The SHTSO conducts pre- and post surveys for the May OP Mobilizations to determine safety use. This information is used for planning purposes when developing the *Comprehensive Highway Traffic Safety Plan*, the *Governor's Highway Safety Plan*, and grant applications.
- ◆ The State completed a comprehensive *Occupant Protection for Children Assessment* in September 2005. This Assessment provides a current review of the status of the child passenger program for Montana along with an extensive list of recommendations that the State is considering and currently implementing.
- ◆ The SHTSO uses an innovative and successful approach to managing multiple small grants through a sponsoring organization. Two examples of this approach are:
 - ◇ Sixteen SafeKids/Safe Communities coalitions at the local level coordinate and conduct occupant protection and impaired driving programs. These coalitions are supported and coordinated by the Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Program.
 - ◇ The Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association manages DUI and occupant protection enforcement projects with 23 sheriffs' offices.
- ◆ The SHTSO conducts considerable outreach to solicit project proposals, consisting of letters, emails, calls, personal meetings with organizations and presentations at association conferences, a *Highway Safety Plan* planning meeting, and website information.

- ◆ Once the SHTSO hires a law enforcement liaison and is approved for and hires an additional FTE, the office should be fully staffed.

1B. CHALLENGES

- ◆ Statewide problem identification for occupant protection programs is limited. No observational studies to measure the impact of programs on restraint use for children have been conducted in many years. Safety belt surveys cannot pinpoint priority areas of low belt use. Useful local surveys are conducted, but the resulting data is limited. There have been no recent statewide assessments of the public's knowledge and attitude regarding occupant protection.
- ◆ Because in-kind contributions of time, money, and materials are not tracked, it is impossible to determine the full extent of resources dedicated to occupant protection. This lack of tracking also makes it difficult to determine the level of commitment to the program from grant-funded entities.
- ◆ The SHTSO has a dedicated, knowledgeable, and committed staff with one individual designated as the occupant protection (OP) manager. However, due to having a small staff, the OP manager has many other responsibilities in other program areas, making it impossible, at the present, to fully dedicate one full-time person to occupant protection.
- ◆ According to the SHTSO procedures manual, there are three or four means to identify potential areas for funding including staff identification, unsolicited requests, requests from law enforcement agencies, and selective traffic enforcement projects selected according to a county ranking list. This system appears to focus so much on law enforcement that it may not sufficiently foster creative approaches to solving traffic safety problems, develop new partners, and ensure that comprehensive programs are planned and implemented.
- ◆ The highway safety planning process and method for project selection is not incorporated in the highway safety plan or posted on the MDT website. As a result, the process may not be readily apparent or easily understood by those who would wish to participate in it.
- ◆ There are many grant programs available to political entities within the state, including the Native American tribes. Each of these programs has its own proposal processes, requirements, deadlines, and demands. Lack of coordination among these grant programs creates a difficult maze for potential proposers, particularly those in most need who are least likely to have the resources to apply for and manage a grant.
- ◆ Program management in Montana is complicated by its large geographic area and low population. Population is largely concentrated in the western portion of the state, resulting in extraordinary low-density in the eastern plains. Therefore, the presence and impact of the SHTSO in many parts of the state is very limited or nonexistent.

- ◆ The lack of a consistent, constant, and reliable fund source for local projects is an impediment to long-term planning, stable programs, and self-sufficiency.

1C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Conduct a comprehensive, statewide occupant protection for children (OPC) observational survey to identify high priority areas in the state.
- ◆ Conduct scientific, localized safety belt observational surveys to provide sufficient detail for problem identification and awarding grant funds.
- ◆ Conduct a comprehensive informational and attitudinal survey of Montana drivers to determine understanding of current law and level of support for primary enforcement.
- ◆ **Dedicate a full-time staff member to lead and manage the occupant protection program.**
- ◆ **Ensure that funding levels are aligned with identified program priorities.**
- ◆ Tribal governments and law enforcement officers need a point of contact for assistance with traffic safety issues in the SHTSO, similar to the Governor's appointed Indian Affairs Coordinator. By appointing a Native American contact person, or coordinator to the SHTSO, it would demonstrate the dedication the office has to assisting reservations with traffic safety needs and concerns.
- ◆ Widely communicate the highway safety planning and project selection process to generate additional partners for highway safety.
- ◆ Explore new networks, including MDT district offices, police chiefs association, and others to advocate for highway safety priorities and expand the distribution of information about the program throughout the state.
- ◆ Create a more visible presence of the SHTSO and free headquarters staff for greater leadership roles and responsibilities by further delegating highway safety program activities to existing and new, additional partners.
- ◆ Work across grant programs at the state level to establish minimum requirements and pool resources to provide training in grant application and management.
- ◆ **To support project self-sufficiency:**
 - ◇ **Initiate a tracking system for in-kind resources;**

- ◇ **Establish a reward mechanism to recognize those entities which provide significant resources of their own to the program; and**
- ◇ **Provide information, training, and guidance on self-sufficiency to all subgrantees.**

2. LEGISLATION/REGULATION/AND POLICY

GUIDELINE:

Each State should enact and enforce occupant protection use laws, regulations and policies to provide clear guidance to the motoring public concerning motor vehicle occupant protection systems.

2A. STRENGTHS

- ◆ The highest level of Montana's leadership is committed to supporting occupant protection, strong enforcement, and a primary belt law. The Governor has publicly spoken out and serves as spokesperson in favor of a primary enforcement safety belt law.
- ◆ The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) director, who is also the governor's highway safety representative, has committed to make primary enforcement of the safety belt law MDT's number one legislative priority for the next legislative session that starts January 2007. The state's attorney general has previously served as the focal point agency head working toward passage of a primary belt law. The state also enjoys a highly committed state senator willing to carry the legislation.
- ◆ The Colonel of the Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) supports a primary belt law and testified in favor of the law in the last legislative session.
- ◆ A primary belt bill enjoys diverse support from many people and organizations in the state, including state and local coalitions, AAA, the motor carrier association, medical personnel, and various enforcement organizations and officers.
- ◆ Although a secondary law state, Montana's safety belt law covers all seating positions.
- ◆ For a secondary law state, Montana enjoys a fairly effective law with an estimated 80 percent use rate.
- ◆ Starting at the instruction permit level, Montana's graduated driver's license law requires all occupants to wear safety belts in a vehicle driven by a novice driver.
- ◆ Montana has a relatively strong child passenger safety law that requires that a child under 6 and weighing less than 60 pounds be properly restrained. Failure to comply is punishable by a fine of up to \$100.
- ◆ The occupant protection law includes a clear definition of what constitutes proper restraint use among motor vehicle occupants.
- ◆ Licensed child care facilities are required to properly restrain children when being transported.

- ◆ Through the Governor's Office, a pilot program is in place to have a Native American court worker trained in State laws. This position will serve to assist Native Americans passing through the court system in the understanding of these laws.

2B. CHALLENGES

- ◆ As a secondary law state, Montana law prohibits primary enforcement of either the safety belt or the child passenger safety law.
- ◆ There is a strong perception that the current penalties for occupant protection violations in Montana (a \$20 fine plus court costs for failure to wear a safety belt and up to a \$100 fine for failure to properly restrain a child) do not serve as deterrents and indicate to the public that the enforcement of the occupant protection laws is an extremely low priority.
- ◆ A violation of the safety belt law is considered a lesser offense than other violations. By law it is not a misdemeanor and may not be counted as a moving violation for purposes of suspending a driver's license, may not be recorded or charged against the driver's record, and is not available/reported to insurance companies.
- ◆ Montana's occupant protection laws do not prohibit transporting occupants of any age in the open cargo bed of pickup trucks.
- ◆ There is confusion in the wording of the current child passenger safety law as to whether it requires restraint of a child who must be under six years old and less than 60 pounds or under six years old or less than 60 pounds.
- ◆ Restraint use on most of Montana's Indian reservations continues to be low. According to a February 2006 NHTSA study for the Indian Country (excluding Navajo), the overall safety belt use rate was only 55.4 percent. The study found that the Northern Plains area, which includes Montana, averaged just 27.6 percent belt use.
- ◆ Native Americans make up 6.2 percent of Montana's population, but represent 20 percent of the state motor vehicle fatalities. A very high percentage of these fatalities, estimated to be near 90 percent, involve an unrestrained occupant, who is also often intoxicated.
- ◆ Indian reservations establish their own laws and traffic codes which may or may not be consistent with the law of the State of Montana. Reservations may enact their own primary belt law or have no law at all. According to testimony, one reservation has no traffic code regulations regarding occupant protection. At least one reservation has adopted Montana's traffic code. At least one reservation has a primary belt law and one is working toward primary enforcement. Traffic codes regarding child passenger safety also vary by reservation.

- ◆ The perception appears to be very high that constituents, in general, are opposed to a primary belt law on the basis of freedom of choice and government intrusion. Because no attitudinal survey has been conducted, the data to refute this perception does not exist.
- ◆ Inconsistencies in supporting data presented during legislative testimony have called into question the credibility of the testimony in legislative hearings. Historically, a unified front with consistent messaging and data has not been presented to the legislature.
- ◆ Though people have testified individually in favor of a primary belt bill, there appears to be little formal documentation of support from significant and powerful organizations to help influence legislation, particularly important law enforcement groups.
- ◆ Though the SHTSO office provides grants to law enforcement agencies to support occupant protection, it does not request that recipient agencies also support an internal policy on safety belt use.

2C. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- ◆ Generate resolutions, letters of support, and similar evidence of widespread and diverse support for stronger occupant protection legislation.
- ◆ **Adopt a primary safety belt law.**
- ◆ **Adopt technical corrections to the primary child passenger safety law to reinstate its primary status.**
- ◆ Prohibit the carrying of passengers in the open beds of pick-up trucks when traveling at roadway speed.
- ◆ Adopt adequate penalties for violations of any occupant protection law, including a fine plus court costs that create a meaningful deterrent to violating the law, and provide that a violation be considered a misdemeanor, and require that a violation be considered a moving violation for purposes of driver license suspension.
- ◆ Generate “white papers” or similar documentation, articulating the primary reasons for making a legislative change, and using Montana specific and consistent data for all partners to use.
- ◆ As a condition of receiving a highway safety grant, require that the recipient agency submit their written internal safety belt use policy, which should require safety belt use of all employees.
- ◆ Work with and support the efforts of reservations to establish consistent, primary enforcement traffic laws for safety belts and child restraints across Montana.

- ◆ Widely communicate the clarification of the current child passenger safety law requirements.
- ◆ Conduct an attitudinal survey to determine the level of public support for primary enforcement.

3. LAW ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

GUIDELINE:

Each State should have a strong law enforcement program, coupled with communication strategies, to increase safety belt and child safety seat use.

3A. STRENGTHS

- ◆ There is broad support within Montana's law enforcement community for the passage of a primary safety belt law.
- ◆ The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has a new director who is safety conscious and capable of mustering support for the State Highway Traffic Safety Office's (SHTSO) initiatives.
- ◆ Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (HMHB) received approval from the command staff of the law enforcement training academy to deliver occupant protection training to students completing basic training.
- ◆ The SHTSO enjoys widespread support for their traffic safety initiatives from the MT law enforcement community.
- ◆ The State has a strong Montana Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association that works with the SHTSO to conduct enforcement campaigns.
- ◆ The Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) conducts highly visible regularly scheduled safety checks in conjunction with the STEP initiative.
- ◆ The MHP Colonel supports a primary belt law (PBL) and testified in favor of the PBL in the last legislative session.
- ◆ The State maintains a strong coalition of community- based organizations that support law enforcement efforts.
- ◆ A number of tribal law enforcement agencies have entered into agreements with their local police and sheriffs' departments to provide cross-jurisdictional authority to officers and deputies.
- ◆ The SHTSO pairs occupant protection enforcement with impaired driving enforcement and has recently expanded these activities into tribal communities.
- ◆ The SHTSO is establishing a law enforcement liaison (LEL) position. This position will serve as the liaison for MT's SHTSO and be responsible for coordinating and overseeing statewide traffic safety initiatives and programs of federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies.

- ◆ The SHTSO recently added fourteen sheriff's departments to the total number of agencies participating in the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program.
- ◆ The State's governor has reached out to the State's tribal nations to engage them in his administration, fostering increased cooperation between tribal law enforcement and State and local law enforcement agencies.
- ◆ The State uses a unified crash investigation report that captures the use or non-use of safety belts by drivers and passengers.
- ◆ The State patrol uses collision data to deploy officers along specific corridors for its STEP program.
- ◆ A portion of the fines collected from motorists convicted of driving while under the influence on the Rocky Boys' Reservation go into a fund to purchase child safety seats.
- ◆ The MHP Colonel offered to provide collision reconstruction training to tribal law enforcement agencies.
- ◆ A number of tribal law enforcement agencies have entered into agreements with their local police and sheriffs' departments to provide cross-jurisdictional authority to officers and deputies.
- ◆ The SHTSO has provided the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribal Law Enforcement Department with a grant to conduct overtime traffic safety patrols targeting speed, DUI and safety belt enforcement. The grant was also offered to all tribes within the state.
- ◆ Four of the seven tribes in Montana have come together to form a DUI task force. The goal of the task force is to remove impaired drivers from the roadway and enforce occupant protection laws.

3B. CHALLENGES

- ◆ Some law enforcement agencies report difficulty in filling overtime STEP funded shifts.
- ◆ There does not appear to be universal support of occupant protection use and enforcement in the MT law enforcement community.
- ◆ Officers issue a disproportionate number of warnings to motorists violating the State's safety belt law, in lieu of citations. For example, a city police department reported that 80 percent of the motorists found in violation of the State's safety belt law received a warning.

- ◆ Due to shortages in staffing and competing priorities, law enforcement agencies, including tribal law enforcement agencies, report they do not have sufficient time to proactively dedicate to occupant protection and enforcement of safety belt and child restraint laws. In addition, many tribes have limited traffic enforcement codes.
- ◆ A lack of occupant protection for children (OPC) training for law enforcement and a confusing child restraint law make it difficult for officers to understand and enforce the State's OPC laws.
- ◆ There is no education program in place for violators of the states safety belt and child restraint laws.
- ◆ It does not appear that law enforcement agencies capitalize on the opportunity to provide safety messages resulting from collision investigations.
- ◆ MHP officers do not routinely participate in occupant protection education and survey efforts conducted within the community.
- ◆ Tribal officers lack basic and advanced collision reconstruction training.

3C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ The Director of the MDT should make personal contact with every Montana chief, sheriff, and law enforcement executive to obtain buy-in to enforce the occupant protection/safety belt statutes. Area briefings and executive level law enforcement association meetings can accomplish this recommendation.
- ◆ **Host a statewide traffic safety/OP summit for law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and judges. This will provide a forum for dialogue; an avenue to highlight OP issues; a mechanism to train judges and prosecutors on recent legislation; media relations training for line officers; etc.**
- ◆ **Provide training and information to the command staff of the State's police and sheriff's departments that demonstrates how to reduce crime and calls for service through a strong traffic enforcement program.**
- ◆ Elevate occupant protection as a top law enforcement priority in Montana, commensurate with the magnitude of the problem.
- ◆ The SHTSO should promote greater collaborative enforcement efforts among the State's law enforcement community to conduct STEP operations with the MHP.
- ◆ Publicize enforcement efforts before the start of mobilizations and report results to the media.

- ◆ Establish a comprehensive community-based, grassroots coalition that includes law enforcement to promote strong occupant protection legislation.
- ◆ Implement a formal recognition program to award the dedicated efforts of law enforcement, both State and tribal, and key partners that contribute to the State's occupant protection program.
- ◆ The SHTSO should require law enforcement agencies that receive grant funding to adopt a model safety belt policy into the agency's policies and procedures.
- ◆ Use tribal colleges and cultural events (e.g., pow wows) to recruit tribal law enforcement officers, as well as train officers and judges in occupant protection issues.
- ◆ Work with the MHP to provide collision and crash reconstruction training to tribal law enforcement agencies.
- ◆ **Encourage the continuation and expansion of the tribal DUI task force efforts being established on three reservations, and insure the continued emphasis on occupant protection enforcement.**

4. COMMUNICATION PROGRAM

GUIDELINE:

As part of each State's communication program, the State should enlist the support of a variety of media, including mass media, to improve public awareness and knowledge about safety belts, air bags and child safety seats and to support enforcement efforts.

4A. STRENGTHS

- ◆ The State Highway Traffic Safety Office (SHTSO) involves a wide variety of partners including local media representatives in creating and delivering innovative, locally customized communications materials and strategies to support Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) activities.
- ◆ The Governor, Montana Highway Patrol (MHP) Colonel and the Governor's Highway Safety Representative provide statewide leadership as spokespersons in media campaigns.
- ◆ Statewide media messages concentrate on promoting restraint use among audiences identified as exhibiting lowest belt use (male pickup drivers between ages 18 to 34) or presenting highest risk (teens approaching minimum driving age).
- ◆ General public informational materials (brochures and a portion of Montana's Drivers' Manual) describing proper use, state law, results of observed use surveys, and benefits of using safety restraints, have been developed and are actively distributed by various partner agencies.
- ◆ The SHTSO utilizes a detailed paid and unpaid media plan that employs a wide variety of formats including radio and television public service announcements, billboards, posters, banners, brochures, press conferences, and press releases.
- ◆ Media campaigns incorporating radio, television, billboard and press activities are linked to overtime enforcement mobilizations (STEP) and achieve market reach to 80% of the state's population.
- ◆ Campaigns utilize a strong enforcement message; complement national media/enforcement campaigns through simultaneous state and local media/enforcement activity, use of national themes, and customization of national themes to relate to local conditions, where possible.
- ◆ In 2004, the SHTSO contracted with the media firm, Banik Communications, to develop a communication strategy specifically for Native Americans. The plan includes education, outreach, media and ties to law enforcement. At the crux of the plan is the utilization of traffic safety communication interns from local tribal colleges to implement the program. Some of the benefits of using the tribal interns include the already

established trust and ties they have with their communities and the first hand knowledge they have regarding effective strategies to disseminate occupant protection messages. In addition, they are a bridge between their Tribes and MDT. In turn, the tribal college student benefits from real life work experience, which may not have been available otherwise, again building a positive relationship between MDT and the tribal communities.

- ◆ Tribal campaigns are youth oriented and are delivered in conjunction with college campuses, schools, rodeos, powwows, tournaments, summer camps, and convenience stores.
- ◆ Periodic surveys are conducted by the SHTSO and Native American Indian tribes to assess public knowledge and attitudes about restraint use issues and to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of public education program components.

4B. CHALLENGES

- ◆ The secondary nature of the law and relatively low penalty for non-belt use diminishes the effectiveness of a strong enforcement message.
- ◆ Brochure materials used for general public education do not consistently contain any information on who to contact in Montana for assistance with questions pertaining to the MDT's Occupant Protection Program or related services.
- ◆ Cultural differences within tribal communities necessitate unique and tailored strategies for promoting occupant protection.
- ◆ The decentralized nature of public information development and dissemination by various partners, presents a high potential for inconsistent or conflicting messages.
- ◆ Public information materials often contain national statistics whereas Montana-based statistics would be more effective.

4C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Continue to reinforce the message that safety belts and child restraints are required by law and the law is actively enforced, regardless of the secondary nature of enforcement.
- ◆ **Develop SHTSO web page to clearly reflect leadership role and staff responsibilities, identify mission, goals, program activities, related laws and partner agencies and public information resources that comprise the State's transportation safety program.**

- ◆ Utilize alternative media messages in addition to enforcement-based messages, to promote proper child restraint use among the widest possible audiences.
- ◆ The SHTSO should create and adopt a positive, central message (e.g. “Buckle Up Montana”) to provide program identity or state “branding”.
- ◆ **Expand the use of local statistics in educational and informational materials to stimulate increased public interest and awareness.**
- ◆ Periodically update public information materials to reflect current laws, state statistics on effectiveness towards program goals (reducing crash injuries/fatalities), best practices for proper restraint use, and directions for obtaining additional information and local assistance.
- ◆ Encourage law enforcement to report restraint use in motor vehicles crashes to the media, and encourage subsequent reporting by media to the public.

5. OCCUPANT PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN (OPC) PROGRAM

GUIDELINE:

Each State should enact occupant protection laws that require the correct restraint of all children in all seating positions, in the care of all drivers. Regulations and policies should exist that provide clear guidance to the motoring public concerning occupant protection for children. Each State should require children birth to 16 years old (or the State's driving age) be properly restrained in the appropriate child restraint or safety belt. Gaps in State child passenger safety and safety belt laws need to be closed so that all children are covered in all seating positions, with requirements for age-appropriate child restraint use. Key provisions of the law should include: the driver is held responsible for ensuring that children are properly restrained; a ban on passengers from the cargo areas of light trucks; and a limit on the number of passengers to the number of available safety belts in the vehicle.

5A. STRENGTHS

- ◆ Occupant protection (OP) usage data are collected on children involved in traffic crashes.
- ◆ Goals for the highway safety plan include the reduction of death and injury to child passengers.
- ◆ Partnerships exist at the state level and in local communities involving key stakeholders.
- ◆ In 2005, Montana participated in an *Occupant Protection for Children (OPC) Program Assessment* to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of its efforts to prevent motor vehicle injuries and death to Montana's children and youth. Montana should be commended for its rapid implementation of a number of those recommendations.
- ◆ Leadership for Montana's OPC Program is shared between the State Highway Traffic Safety Office (SHTSO) and the local Safe Kids Safe Communities (SKSC) programs coordinated through Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (HMHB).
- ◆ HMHB, through the SKSC Coalitions, address 85 percent of Montana's population.
- ◆ SKSC conducts Public Information & Education (PI&E) campaigns in conjunction with SHTSO and Banik Communications about occupant protection for adults and children; acts as a clearinghouse for OPC information; implements projects such as *Saved By The Belt* recognition, inspection stations, car seat training for parents and caregivers, and distribution of low cost child restraints to underserved populations.
- ◆ HMHB received approval from the command staff of the law enforcement training academy to deliver occupant protection for children training to students completing basic training.
- ◆ Child restraint distribution to Native American tribes through Indian Health Services (IHS) and SKSC is included in the *Montana Comprehensive Safety Plan*.

- ◆ It appears that local programs are doing a commendable job of developing and implementing OPC programs in their communities.
- ◆ Currently 134 technicians and 11 CPS instructors are certified through the Standardized 32-Hour Child Passenger Safety Program.
- ◆ A State Lead Instructor has been designated to plan and coordinate OPC Certification classes; ensure classes are carried out in accordance with National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and Safe Kids Certification policies and guidelines; to communicate with the technicians, instructors and program coordinators about new technical information, meetings, trainings, upcoming events, and web promotions; and to disseminate information about re-certification and renewal to current technicians and formerly certified individuals.
- ◆ The State has designated an individual with the responsibility for developing and maintaining a current and accurate list of certified technicians and instructors.
- ◆ HMHB has a toll-free telephone number to facilitate the public's access to information and services regarding children's health and safety issues.
- ◆ SHTSO, through HMHB, currently collects information on the number of child restraints checked at Safe Kids/Safe Communities-funded clinics and fitting stations.
- ◆ A highly successful Montana Hospital Grand Rounds Tour has been conducted to educate hospital personnel, doctors, pediatricians, registered nurses and others about OPC. This may serve as a model for other States.
- ◆ At least one certified technician has been trained about the proper transportation of children with special medical needs.
- ◆ Current SKSC programs are under contract by the MDT to reach out to Native Americans, both on and off the reservations. The goal is to have Native Americans establish their own SKSC coalitions on reservations. The SKSC provides public information programs on the importance of safety belt use and problems associated with drinking and driving.
- ◆ SHTSO and SKSC are expanding outreach to Native American tribes. Montana will research viability of conducting the Safe Native American Passengers (SNAP), CPS Awareness or 32-Hour Standardized CPS training on all seven of Montana's reservations.
- ◆ Short CPS Awareness classes have been conducted in Montana by some local programs.

5B. CHALLENGES

- ◆ At present, Montana's OPC law is a secondary enforcement law with gaps that deny Montana's children adequate protection.
- ◆ Grassroots support for primary seat belt and child restraint legislation covering children up to age 16 is needed.
- ◆ Enforcement of the OPC law is hindered by its current secondary enforcement status.
- ◆ Law enforcement officers, particularly tribal officers, are not fully trained and/or made aware of best practices on child occupant protection and safety seat installation.
- ◆ During child safety seat clinics, it appears that no data are collected for children for property safety belt fit.
- ◆ No observational studies have been conducted in many years to determine if children and other rear seat occupants are restrained and how they are restrained.
- ◆ The State's child passenger safety training, public information and outreach programs, fitting stations and child restraint distribution programs use a significant portion of the funds obtained from the Safe Kids BuckleUp Program grant funds available to state and local Safe Kids Coalitions.
- ◆ OPC programs do not address proper restraint of youth between the ages of eight and 15.
- ◆ It is difficult to locate information about OPC from MDT's website.
- ◆ Those interested in or registered for a certification course are often unaware of the expectations for their involvement in local programs in return for receiving this training.

5C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ To better protect Montana's children and encourage enforcement, the State's legislative agenda should consider including the elements of a model occupant protection law:
 - ◇ Making the driver responsible for restraint violations by passengers under the age of 16;
 - ◇ Increase the child restraint requirements to include children through, and including, 8 years of age;
 - ◇ Requiring children less than 13 years of age to be properly restrained and to ride in a rear seat when a rear seat position is available;
 - ◇ Prohibitions against children riding in the cargo area of pickup trucks;

- ◇ Adding the assignment of driver's license points as penalties for violations of the occupant and child restraint laws; and
- ◇ Removing all exemptions for riding without appropriate restraint when restraints are available.
- ◆ Conduct annual or bi-annual observational studies to monitor restraint use for children.
- ◆ Research and access additional funding sources to meet the identified needs of the State.
- ◆ Develop a program to address occupant protection programs for children ages nine through fifteen (Tweens), utilizing current available research on Tweens. Include PIE messages that focus on the safety value of assuring that Tweens ride in the back seat and are properly restrained.
- ◆ **To increase the number of OPC advocates and create additional grass roots support for primary OP laws, short awareness courses should be conducted to reach professions such as law enforcement officers, first responders, child care providers, and health care personnel.**
- ◆ Provide an opportunity for instructors and technicians to network, obtain technical updates and enhance their skills; facilitate communication among OPC advocates, law enforcement, and other key stakeholders; and to encourage sharing and replication of successful local programs.
- ◆ In the collection of information on services provided, assure that local programs include the total number of children assessed for proper safety belt fit, not just the number of child restraints checked.
- ◆ **Make it a priority to develop a stand-alone, easy to remember, occupant protection/child passenger safety website, e.g. www.buckleupmontana.org and a corresponding toll-free telephone number. The goal of the website and toll-free line is to serve as a centralized source for Montana-specific safe transportation information. Through these services parents, caregivers, transporters and advocates can access accurate information about Montana's occupant protection restraint laws, the correct use of restraint systems for children, youth and adults and the types and locations of services available.**
- ◆ Place a link to the occupant protection for children information (such as the existing one on bicycle safety) on the home page of MDT's website.
- ◆ **Ensure the Montana Hospital Grand Rounds Tour reaches all hospitals and consider implementation of a similar concept for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and law enforcement personnel.**
- ◆ The SHTSO should support the tribal DUI task force efforts being established on three reservations, and insure the continued emphasis on occupant protection enforcement.

- ◆ The SHTSO should support the tribal DUI task force efforts being established on three reservations, and insure the continued emphasis on occupant protection enforcement.

6. OUTREACH PROGRAM

GUIDELINE:

Each State should encourage extensive statewide and community involvement in occupant protection education by involving individuals and organizations outside the traditional highway safety community. Representation from health, business and education sectors, as well as diverse populations within the community is encouraged, among others. Community involvement broadens public support for the State's programs and can increase a State's ability to deliver highway safety education programs.

A. Diverse Ethnic, Cultural and Religious Populations

Each State should work closely with individuals and organizations that represent the various ethnic, cultural and religious populations reflected in their demographics. Individuals from these groups may not be reached through traditional communication markets. Community leaders and representatives from the various religious, ethnic and cultural groups and organizations will help States to increase the use of child safety seats and safety belts.

B. Health/Medical

Each State should integrate occupant protection into health programs. The failure of drivers and passengers to use occupant protection systems is a major public health problem that must be recognized by the medical and health care communities.

C. School-Based Programs

Each State should encourage local school boards and educators to incorporate occupant protection education into school curricula. Buckling up is a good health habit and, like other health habits, must be taught at an early age and reinforced until the habit is well established.

D. Worksite

Each State and local subdivision should encourage all employers to require safety belt use on the job as a condition of employment. Private sector employers should follow the lead of Federal and State government employers and comply with Executive Order 13043, "Increasing Seat Belt Use in the United States," all applicable FMCSA Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations requiring private business employees to use safety belts on the job.

6A. STRENGTHS

- ◆ The existing network of SAFEKIDS/Safe Communities (SKSC) coalitions, through subcontracts with Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies (HMHB), serves as a Clearinghouse for statewide dissemination of public informational materials and actively conducts

outreach in 24 of Montana's counties with potential to reach an estimated 80 percent of the population.

- ◆ A media contractor develops localized press materials in consultation with local SKSC coalitions and law enforcement agencies to support STEP mobilizations.
- ◆ During the past several years, communication between Tribes and the State Highway Traffic Safety Office (SHTSO) has improved substantially and has increased the level of trust and information sharing between State and Tribal governments.
- ◆ The SHTSO initiated a TriParty gathering to listen to tribal representatives about their concerns pertaining to traffic safety and related problems on their reservations. This meeting also provided an opportunity for the SHTSO to share grant opportunities and other resources that are available to tribes.
- ◆ The SHTSO has retained Tribal college interns to assist in design and delivery of culturally appropriate public education campaigns that appeal to the unique characteristics of each Tribe and core tribal values of family and respect.
- ◆ Tribal campaigns are youth oriented and are delivered in conjunction with college campuses, schools, rodeos, powwows, tournaments, summer camps, and convenience stores.
- ◆ At least one Native American tribe is working with their Prosecutor's Office to develop a traffic safety course for violators.
- ◆ SKSC has recognized the importance of working with Native Americans as evidenced by the addition of Governor's Indian Affairs Coordinator to their State advisory board and their efforts with the Flathead Reservation.
- ◆ The Office of Public Instruction has incorporated occupant protection education into thirteen of twenty-one modules comprising the Driver Education curriculum.
- ◆ While there has been minimal outreach to the medical community in the past, SKSU Coalitions are working to deliver presentations at annual conferences for trauma and EMS professionals, and are delivering a series of "Grand Rounds" presentations to educate doctors, nurses, local officials, and others.
- ◆ The "Saved By The Belt" program, coordinated by local SKSC coalitions, provides an excellent forum for personalizing the impact of traffic crashes on Montana families by identifying victim families and crash survivors who can tell their stories at events or in media campaigns.
- ◆ Questions about safety belt use are included in annual Youth Risk Behavior Surveys conducted by Office of Public Instruction.

- ◆ Montana's population is expected to increase with respect to ethnic and cultural diversity.

6B. CHALLENGES

- ◆ The more rural, less populated counties are not served by SKSC outreach efforts.
- ◆ SKSC coalitions do not have established relationships with all of the Native American tribes.
- ◆ There are no structured presentations used to educate STEP officers, school age children including teens or violators of restraint laws.
- ◆ Native American enrollment in driver education courses is notably low.
- ◆ Employee-based outreach is extremely limited.

6C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ **Develop and implement systems to provide education on the importance of proper restraint use to law enforcement and teen/school audiences throughout the State on a regular basis.**
- ◆ **Expand SKSC outreach to all Montana tribes.**
- ◆ **Intensify outreach (fact sheets, data, personal contacts, etc.) to law enforcement, fire, medical, emergency medical services, and others to increase support of occupant protection program efforts.**
- ◆ Provide culturally appropriate materials, in alternative language formats to accommodate non-English speaking populations and growing ethnic diversity.
- ◆ Implement an education/alternate sentencing program for violators of the State's safety belt and child restraint law.

7. DATA AND EVALUATION PROGRAM

GUIDELINE:

Each State should have access to and analyze reliable data sources for problem identification and program planning. Each State should conduct several different types of evaluation to effectively measure progress and to plan and implement new program strategies.

7A. STRENGTHS

- ◆ The SHTSO is recognized and appreciated by Montana highway safety stakeholders as the State's main source of highway safety data.
- ◆ The SHTSO completes an annual problem identification report and an evaluation report, as required by federal law. Most of the information originates from traffic crashes occurring on public roadways. Fatal and incapacitating injury trend data and demographic information for drivers and vehicles are included. Rates are calculated using vehicle miles, licensed drivers or population when possible. Usage rates are tracked on all roadway strata types.
- ◆ The SHTSO conducts a NHTSA-approved statewide safety belt observation survey each year during June at 120 locations statewide.
- ◆ The SHTSO conducts pre- and post-safety belt mobilization surveys for program evaluation and planning purposes.
- ◆ A Traffic Records Assessment was conducted in 2004, which identified recommendations for records program improvements to enhance data collection, programming and evaluation of state highway safety programs, including occupant protection. A Strategic Plan for Safety Data improvement was developed for data and system improvements.
- ◆ Upgrades of several key highway safety databases are currently underway. When completed, these upgrades will enhance the SHTSO's ability to conduct problem identification, programming and evaluation of highway safety projects. These data projects include:
 - ◇ The Department of Justice Motor Vehicle Division's upgrade of its vehicle and driver licensing databases, which will include access to summons, conviction, and crash history;
 - ◇ The Montana Department of Transportation's development of a single location method for crashes, using GIS/GPS roadway technology in combination with a Geographic Information System;

- ◇ The Office of Court Administration's installation of a statewide case management system; and
- ◇ The Department of Public Health and Human Services, EMS and Injury Prevention Section's implementation of an expanded Trauma Records database, with required participation by all hospitals, as well as a statewide uniform EMS run form and data collection system.
- ◆ The SHTSO is in the process of applying for NHTSA Section 408 funds to link important State highway safety data systems, for more timely and comprehensive data collection and analysis. The SHTSO is an active member of the State Traffic Records Coordinating Committee (TRCC), a critical data improvement-coordinating group.
- ◆ The SHTSO is actively involved with other important partners in the development of the Montana *Comprehensive Traffic Safety Plan*, which is focusing, among other issues, on the identification of highway safety data needs and support of state occupant protection and impaired driving program goals.
- ◆ The SHTSO has placed a special program emphasis on the development of good working relationships with the seven Montana Indian tribes to increase safety restraint usage and decrease the incidence of DUI. The collection and integration of data related to motor vehicle crashes on tribal lands has been an important feature of the SHTSO's outreach program and is included in Montana's *Comprehensive Highway Traffic Safety Planning* efforts. Valuable data has been collected during the development of media campaigns.
- ◆ The Federal Highway Administration in Montana has recognized the need for coordinated and complete data collection and analysis from local Tribes. To this end, they have assigned a tribal coordinator to facilitate data collection efforts. The pilot data collection program has begun on four reservations.

7B. CHALLENGES

- ◆ While recognizing the value of serving as the primary expert source of highway safety data, considerable staff time is spent on disseminating data, which places a burden on a small office.
- ◆ Need and interest exists for comprehensive occupant protection data. High priority users of this information include elected officials and others seeking passage of primary safety belt and child passenger safety legislation. A variety of pertinent data is available from agency sources, but the resulting data has not been coordinated. Conflicting information has caused problems for presenters during legislative hearings.
- ◆ Statewide problem identification is limited for occupant protection programs. No observational studies to measure the impact of programs on restraint use for children have been conducted in many years. Safety belt surveys cannot pinpoint priority areas of

low belt use. Useful local surveys are conducted, but the resulting data is limited. There have been no recent statewide assessments of the public's knowledge and attitude regarding occupant protection.

- ◆ Most of the data analysis currently conducted by the SHTSO is limited to crash records information. However, the SHTSO requires data from several data systems to prepare its annual Highway Safety Plan, justify the expenditure of federal grant funds, approve applications for projects, respond to the public's need for answers regarding safety issues, monitor the State's safety trends and support new highway safety legislative measures. Until the upgrades of certain data systems are completed, the data from the other systems will continue to be available only in summary form and provided upon request, which often requires considerable time to receive the information from those systems.
- ◆ While current system upgrades, planned or in progress, on individual State agency data systems are commendable, they are under construction without a sufficient coordination or linkage component to other systems.
- ◆ There is a lack of quantitative evaluation of highway safety grant program activities. Montana program evaluations are generally process evaluations, and primarily entail an accounting or listing of a variety of program activities. There is no standardized, statistically rigorous pre- and post-impact evaluation of grants.
- ◆ Occupant protection citation and conviction data cannot be currently tracked for problem identification, planning and evaluation purposes.
- ◆ Current Trauma Registry data retrieval does not include hospital cost information.
- ◆ Some Tribes reported that they are unable to apply for various traffic safety grants due to limited traffic codes and traffic related collision data not being available. A challenge to the current data systems that are being utilized is a lack of technical support when the systems are not functioning properly, and a lack of properly trained officers to retrieve data.

7C. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Develop website access and an online query tool for easy public access to occupant protection and other safety data, and to reduce staff time in answering data requests.
- ◆ **Complete the Section 408 *Traffic Records Improvement* grant application and focus on needed linkages of key highway safety databases to obtain timely and comprehensive data for planning, programming and evaluation. Include a method, such as Crash Outcomes Data Evaluation System (CODES), to link trauma data to crash data in order to gain a more complete picture of state and local community crash outcomes and economic costs.**

- ◆ Continue participation in the *Comprehensive Highway Traffic Safety Planning* effort underway in Montana to help maintain a data-driven focus on occupant protection program improvements.
- ◆ Continue to encourage, through participation on the Traffic Records Coordinating Committee and the State planning effort, the enhancements of key highway safety databases to conduct timely and comprehensive problem identification, programming and evaluation of highway safety grants.
- ◆ Include hospital/patient costs in the Trauma Registry database.
- ◆ Encourage the implementation of a centralized statewide citation tracking system that would contain citation information and track all actions pertaining to that citation, through disposition.
- ◆ **Adopt quantifiable objectives and performance measures for evaluation and review of all occupant protection projects that clearly correlate with the State's program goals and objectives. Establish and provide examples of evaluation options in sub-grants, such as pre- and post evaluations or comparison data demonstrating a change in awareness, knowledge, and/or occupant protection behaviors.**
- ◆ **Integrate productivity measures of overall safety belt use and conversion rates into the planning and evaluation of programs.**
- ◆ Seek assistance from a university or other entity in the development of new grant activity evaluation tools.
- ◆ Conduct a statewide Occupant Protection for Children (OPC) observational survey to include age, seating location and restraint status.
- ◆ **Support the *Comprehensive Highway Traffic Safety Plan* data goal of “developing data collection procedures that will encourage coordination with other entities and establish a data collection process and storage to be used in project decision-making.”**
- ◆ Provide opportunities for program staff, grantee and stakeholder participation in training, such as the NHTSA Data Analysis and Evaluation course, meetings and other traffic safety-related educational opportunities.

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PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Susan (Sue) Bryant is the (retired) Director of the Public Transportation Division of the Texas Department of Transportation. The Public Transportation Division has 180 employees and manages federal and state grant programs to rural and small urban transportation systems, the State's medical transportation program, and public transportation planning.
- During her career with TxDOT, she has held the position of State Traffic Safety Director, Assistant to the Deputy Director for Field Operations, and Highway Safety Planner and Program Manager. She has served as Secretary and Member of the Board of the National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives and Member of the Law Enforcement Committee of the Transportation Research Board.
- She has taught high school and adults, consulted for the media in major markets, and teaches management to state and local officials. She has been named to "Who's Who of American Women," has received the National Award for Public Service from the U.S. DOT, and is a two-time recipient of the AASHTO President's Modal Award for highway safety.
- A Phi Beta Kappa graduate in English from the University of Iowa, she holds a Master's Degree in Communications from Iowa and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Texas at Austin.

BRIAN GEORGE

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Brian George is a trooper with the Washington State Patrol. He has been a trooper with the state patrol for eight years.
- Currently, he is the District Eight, Public Information Officer responsible for all media dissemination of state patrol activity within the seven counties of the district.
- He is a Technical Collision Investigator for the Washington State Patrol.
- He began his law enforcement career with the Suquamish Tribal Police Department where he was employed for two years, working both in the patrol division and the fisheries patrol division.
- Prior to police work, he worked for the Suquamish Youth Services Division.
- Brian is a member of the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe in Washington State.

JO ANN KELLEY

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Jo Ann Kelley worked for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in Washington, DC, from 2003 to 2005. Serving in NHTSA's Office of Operations and Resources, she worked with regional offices in the administration of grant programs, primarily in the impaired driving, traffic records and alcohol and safety belt mobilization programs. Her duties also included development work on NHTSA's new Section 408 Traffic Records Grant. She also participated in the development of Safety Conscious Planning and Comprehensive Highway Safety Planning programs.
- Prior to her work with NHTSA, she served for five years as Manager of the Idaho Office of Highway Safety, at the Idaho Transportation Department, following five years as a highway safety grants officer.
- She served as a member of the Idaho Safe and Drug Free Schools Advisory Board, Idaho Motorcycle Safety Board, and as a staff member of the State Child Mortality Review Advisory Team and the Governor's Alcohol and Drug Prevention Committee.
- She also served as Secretary and executive board member of the Governor's Highway Safety Association (GHSA).
- She holds degrees in English and Gerontology from Boise State University, in Boise, Idaho.

KATHRYN KRUGER

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Executive Director, Safety Restraint Coalition, non-profit corporation, Kirkland, Washington,
1996 – Present

Development of grassroots community occupant protection programs

Grassroots lobby group for implementation of Washington's safety belt law

Primary media contact, development and implementation of all child passenger safety
programs for highway safety office

Regional Mentor, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to answer child car seat
inquiries on their Auto Safety Hotline, 1998 – 2001

Instructor

Standardized Child Passenger Safety Technician Training Course since 2/1998

NHTSA Child Passenger Safety Advocacy Skills Workshop

National Safety Council, Chicago, Illinois

General Motors/NHTSA Child Car Seat Distribution Program, Child Passenger Safety
Training Workshops, Hawaii

National SAFEKIDS Campaign, Washington, D.C.

Child Passenger Safety Campaign Kick-Off, Orlando, Florida

General Motors/NHTSA Child Car Seat Distribution Program, Child Passenger Safety
Training Workshops, Alaska and Hawaii

Traffic Occupant Protection Strategies (TOPS) Law Enforcement Curriculum

State Coordinator

Washington State, NHTSA Misuse of Child Restraints Study, 2002

Washington State, NHTSA CPS Observational Misuse Survey, 1994

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- KARS and Special KARS Program, National Easter Seals, Portland, Oregon
- Instructor, Facilitator Training, Transportation Safety Institute, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Basic Collision Investigation, Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, Burien
- Advanced Program Management, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- Business Administration classes, Bellevue Community College
- Early Childhood Education classes, Shoreline Community College

ORGANIZATIONS/AFFILIATIONS

- Member of ISO/WIGI 1 Task Force Developing Usability Criteria, 1999 in British Columbia
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Public Service Award, 1998
- Governor's Excellence in Traffic Safety, Lifetime Achievement Award, 1991
- Development of Child Car Seat Bounty Program, DOT Innovative Program Award
- Member Occupant Protection Law Enforcement Advisory Committee, Washington State
- Charter Member National Child Passenger Safety Board, Washington, D.C.
- Member, Washington State SAFE KIDS Coalition
- Member, Pacific Interagency Child Restraint Advisory Committee, British Columbia
- Past-Member, National Advisory Board, SafetyBeltSafe USA, Los Angeles, California

CARLA LEVINSKI

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Occupant Protection Program Manager, Oregon Department of Transportation- Safety Division

- USDOT NHTSA Occupant Protection Program Management Curriculum Development Team

National Child Passenger Safety Technician (formerly certified)

NHTSA Occupant Protection Program Assessment Team – State of Hawaii, Commonwealth of Kentucky

ORGANIZATIONS/AFFILIATIONS

Member, ACTS Oregon Child Safety Seat Resource Center Advisory Board

Member, SafetyBeltSafe, USA

EDUCATION

Master of Public Administration (MPA), Boise State University, Boise, ID

Graduate Fellow, USEPA Drinking Water Program

B. S. Environmental Health Science, Boise State University, Boise, ID

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Lieutenant, Administrative Resources Section
Tucson Police Department

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Commander, Traffic Enforcement Section, Tucson Police Department (TPD)
- Assistant Division Commander, Operations Division Midtown (TPD)
- Detective Sergeant, Violent Crimes Section (TPD)
- Detective Sergeant Office of Professional Standards (TPD)

ORGANIZATIONS & AFFILIATIONS

Grant Board Member NHTSA-National Latino Children's Advocacy Center

Grant Project Manager NHTSA-Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association

Member Management Development Institute

Past Member Southern Arizona DUI Task Force

Past Member Multicultural Leadership Development Program

Spanish Language Instructor Partner's in Training Consultants

AWARDS

TPD Unit Citation Aggressive Driving Program Manager

TPD Medal of Valor